



13th Estonian Rural Parliament took place July 26-28 2019 in Räpina, Põlva County



13th Estonian Rural Parliament took place July 26th to 28th 2019 in Räpina, Põlva County (Southern Estonia) with 350 participants: 15 delegations from Estonian Counties, guests, partners, politicians, 11 participants from 7 foreign countries. The event was arranged in cooperation with the ROAD-project and the European Rural Parliament. The international part of the event had 102 participants from 7 countries.

For the international participants the event started already on the 25th July with a get-together-dinner in Tallinn and interesting study visits on route to Põlva on the 26th

The Estonian Rural Parliament was opened by a parade with all the participants to the village park led by the President of Estonian Parliament, mr. Henn Põlluaas. Here the Estonian President Mrs Kersti Kaljulaid gave a speech wishing the participants best of luck for the following days event. Afterwards mr. Henn Põlluaas as member of the Jury announced the Estonian Village of The Year: Lüübnitsa. Also other prizes in different categories were given and this was followed by a concert in the neighbouring Räpina Church.

The Estonian Rural Parliament included plenaries and workshops among the latter the international workshop: "Volunteer work and village leadership in Nordic and Baltic countries" where participants from all countries represented were sharing experiences on how to define, value and appreciate volunteer work and its importance. Also various ways of structuring the volunteer work in different countries were discussed – all to share, and to bring back inspiration. A very interesting plenary discussion with representatives from ministries and parliament as well as stakeholder organisations was moderated efficiently by Urmas Vaino, a well known Estonian TV journalist.

During closing ceremony Krista Habakukk, chair of Kodukant handed over an updated version of Rural Parliament Manifesto to the Minister of Rural Affairs Mart Järvi as representative of Estonian Government

The Manifesto consists of 11 points on the following issues:

- 1) Harmonised coordination of rural life
- 2) Defining "Rural areas/regions"



- 3) Accessibility (transport as well as Broadband)
- 4) Involving communities in decision-making processes
- 5) Developing community services
- 6) Empowering people and Life Long Learning
- 7) Innovation in rural entrepreneurship
- 8) Strengthening rural urban cooperation
- 9) Protection and security for inhabitants
- 10) Combination and coordination of various sources of finance
- 11) Inclusion of CLLD – together with LEADER

The Chair of Põlva County Village Movement, Ahti Bleive announced the host of the next Estonian Rural Parliament and this will be Harju County Village Movement, who is planning already the event in August 2021 and invited us all to attend.

Since 1996 Kodukant (Estonian Village Movement) has supported the Estonian Rural Parliament to bring together villagers, organizations, local and national representatives with the aim to discuss rural development and look for solutions to the present problems. The Estonian Rural Parliament is unique in the way that the participants are brought together every two years to discuss the problems of the countryside and bring them to governmental decisions. Estonian Rural Parliament is providing also a good platform for discussion and exchange of ideas and best practice between international organizations connected with the rural development in different European countries.

